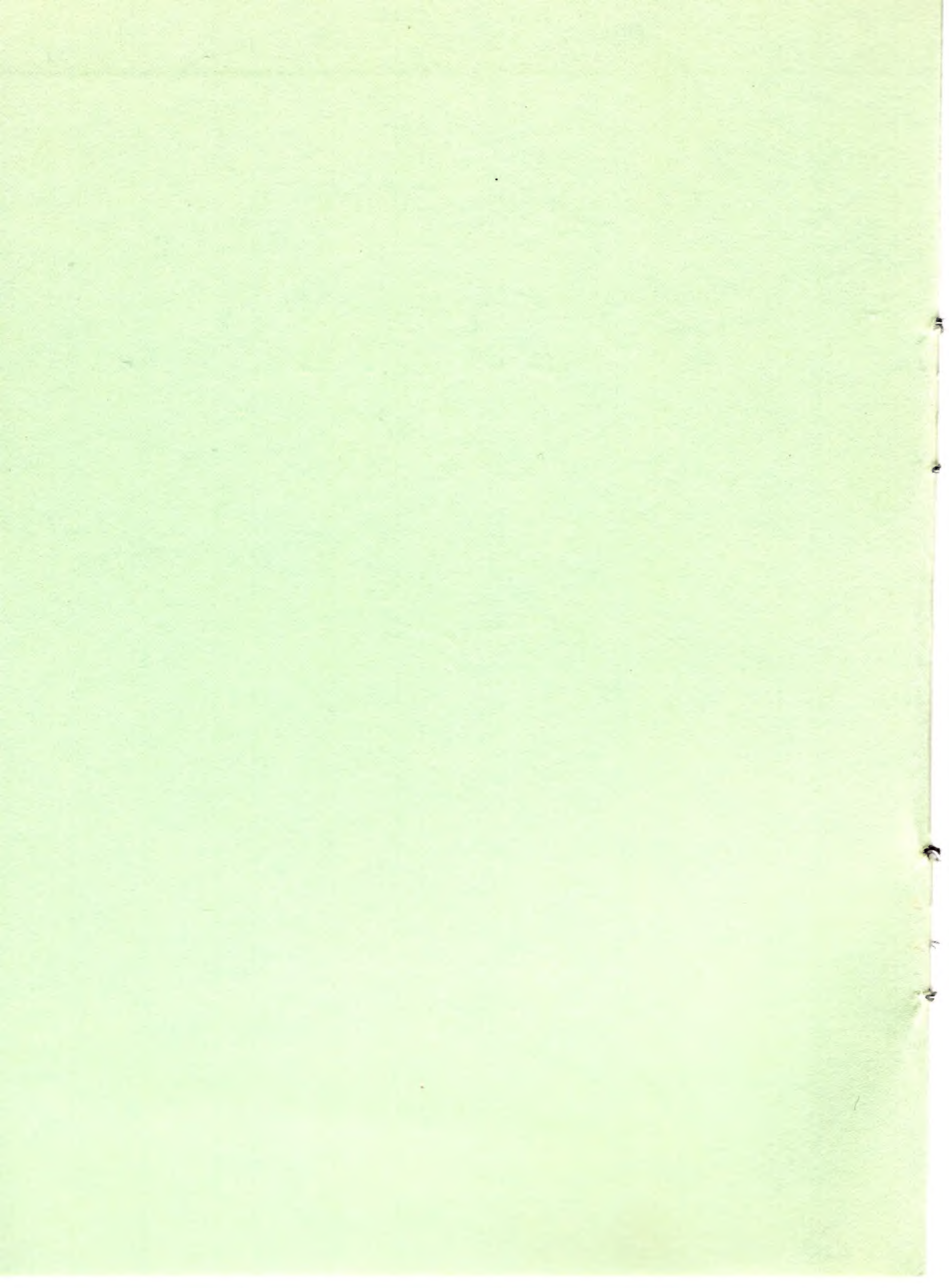
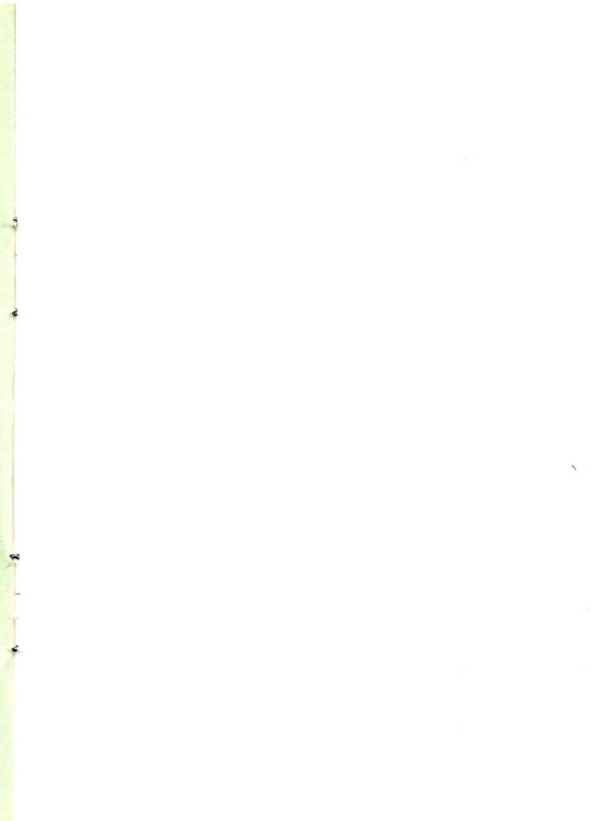


ON PRINTING A
SPECIMEN
BOOK



Jane W. Roberts
1980





ON PRINTING A SPECIMEN BOOK



Jane W. Roberts
1980

All rights reserved

Printed by
OLD-TIME PRINTING
J.W. ROBERTS, PROP.
FITZWILLIAM, N.H. 03447



Introduction

A rewarding printing project is a book illustrating one's own collection of type, cuts, ornaments and borders or portions thereof.

Besides being a concise answer to "what do you mean, you print?" it compels one to get better acquainted with the collection, to organize and use it better.

Having printed four specimen books over the last dozen years, the following pearls are offered the neophyte.

Copy

Before considering anything, determine copy, which will more or less decide size and length. For a first effort it is better to limit the book to one facet of the collection if it is a large one. Even 40 fonts will make a good-sized book, without including cases of borders, ornaments and cuts. How fonts are shown, names of faces or idiot lines, is the printer's option.

Determine what peripheral material will be included. Besides the usual fly leaves and title, do you plan to index, include information about your shop, use photos or add a colophon?

Format

Several practical (as opposed to æsthetic) considerations may influence choice of format. Perhaps you are lucky and get lots of handy offcuts from a big printer. Maybe you have a paper cutter.

If you have a choice, pick a format that is higher than wide, to facilitate printing and binding, and ease of handling as a book. Keep in mind the binding, as this will determine margins, and whether the book is to be trimmed

A page size of 6x9 is about as large as is practical for the average press used by the home printer. A page width of $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches will take a set width of 15 picas, which is about as narrow as is feasible, unless faces to be shown are small. A page width of $4\frac{5}{8}$ inches allows a set width of 20 picas with generous margins.

A small format will permit printing two or four pages up.

Stock

Stock which is opaque, fairly hard and smooth and not over 60 lb. will produce the best results. If printing a combination of new and worn type, this sort of stock works best. For binding purposes, make sure the

stock is cut with the grain running the same direction as the spine of the book; otherwise it is likely to skew when bound. White, cream or buff hues show off the print better than darker colors.

Binding

Easiest is a standard sheet punched for a ring binder, but this is expensive unless the recipients provide covers. Other options include saddle stitching if a single signature, hand sewing with a paper or hard cover, or perfect binding. Consider plastic comb binding if you have access to the machine.

Style

Try to have a unifying theme tying the book together, both for appearance and ease of use. If faces are shown alphabetically no index is needed. Should this be impractical, then plan an index. Choose a type face of which you have a generous amount for

text, and one which is unobtrusive though legible. Include page numbers both for the reader and to help avoid imposition errors.

Press Run

Unless you are turned on by presswork and know lots more serious printers than I do, limit your run to under a hundred. After a year I succeeded in swapping 50 copies of a 54-page book. One specimen book I know of (160 pages) was issued in an edition of 25 copies.

Color of Ink

While this is a matter of personal preference, keep in mind your book will not be printed all at once, so pick a ready-mixed ink instead of creating a new color. It is all but impossible to duplicate such ink. Try to keep ink coverage as uniform as possible to avoid noticeable contrast between facing pages printed at different times.

How Many Pages ?

The controlling factor here is the total material illustrated, but keep in mind the method of binding, thickness of signatures, and the postal regulation which states that book rates apply only to a book containing at least 24 pages.

Copyright

It is not necessary to copyright, but as it is easy, costs only \$10, immortalizes you at the Library of Congress and feeds your ego, consider it. Apply to the Copyright Office for the forms.

Distribution

Whatever you do, get the most out of the book you have just spent so many dozens of hours on. If sold, make the price right. A good way to get other specimen books is to swap. I have traded copies thus, and also for private press books, type, equipment, information, cuts and ornaments.

Colophon

Type faces, in order of appearance, are: 12 and 18 pt. Racine, 8 pt. Racine Circular and 8 pt. Barnhart Bros. & Spindler Oldstyle No. 9.

Pages treadled two up on a 7 x 11 Gordon Oldstyle, illustrated on back cover.

Stock is 70 lb. Lithofelt suede G Mid Tec, dull coated. Cover is Offcut green index.

Edition is 200 copies, 151 of which are for distribution to APA members.



